



UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

August 10, 2015

Mr. Leopoldo Miranda
Assistant Regional Director
for Ecological Services
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1875 Century Boulevard
Atlanta, GA 30345

SUBJECT: U.S. NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION PRELIMINARY
DETERMINATION OF NO EFFECTS REGARDING THE OCONEE NUCLEAR
STATION INDEPENDENT SPENT FUEL STORAGE INSTALLATIONS
DECOMMISSIONING FUNDING PLAN DOCKETS 72-04 AND 72-40

Dear Mr. Miranda:

By letter dated December 13, 2012, Duke Energy Carolinas, LLC (Duke) submitted a decommissioning funding plan (DFP) for the Oconee Nuclear Station (ONS) Independent Spent Fuel Storage Installations (ISFSI's) for U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission's (NRC) review and approval. The ISFSI's are part of the Oconee nuclear power plant facility, located in Seneca, South Carolina. Pursuant to 50 CFR 402.13, the NRC seeks to initiate informal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine whether the NRC's review and approval of the DFP requires formal consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended.

The NRC regulations at Title 10 of the *Code of Federal Regulations* (10 CFR) Part 72, "Licensing Requirements for the Independent Storage of Spent Nuclear Fuel, High-Level Radioactive Waste, and Reactor-Related Greater than Class C Waste," govern the storage of spent nuclear fuel (spent fuel) generated at commercial nuclear power reactors licensed by the NRC. Spent fuel that has been removed from the reactor's spent fuel pool is typically stored at a nuclear power plant's ISFSI.

The NRC requires its licensees to plan for the eventual decommissioning of their licensed facilities prior to license termination. On June 17, 2011, the NRC published a final rule amending its decommissioning planning regulations (76 *Federal Register* (FR) 35512). The final rule amended the NRC regulation, 10 CFR 72.30, which concerns financial assurance and decommissioning for ISFSI. This regulation now requires each holder of, or applicant for, a license under 10 CFR Part 72 to submit, for NRC review and approval, a DFP. The purpose of the DFP is to demonstrate the licensee's financial assurance, *i.e.*, that funds will be available to decommission the ISFSI. The NRC staff is reviewing the information submitted by Duke. Specifically, the NRC must determine whether Duke's DFP contains the information required by 10 CFR 72.30(b) and whether Duke has provided reasonable assurance that funds will be available to decommission the ISFSI.

The ONS ISFSI's DFP is publicly available in the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) accessible at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. The ADAMS accession number for the application package is ML12353A033.

The NRC approval of Duke's DFP will not authorize or result in changes to licensed operations or maintenance activities, or changes in the types, characteristics, or quantities of radiological or non-radiological effluents released into the environment from the ISFSI, or result in the creation of any solid waste. Moreover, the approval of the DFP will not authorize any construction activity, facility modification, or any other land-disturbing activity. Additionally, the scope of this proposed action does not include, and will not result in, the review and approval of any decontamination or decommissioning activity or license termination for the ISFSI or any other part of the ONS site. Any future NRC approval of site-disturbing remediation activities conducted by Duke would require an NRC environmental review, including an Endangered Species Act review.

In accordance with 10 CFR Part 51, the NRC regulations that implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the NRC is preparing an environmental assessment (EA) for the proposed action. Given the reasons set forth above, the NRC has determined that the approval of the DFP is a procedural and administrative action that will not result in any significant impact to the environment. Therefore, the NRC has determined that the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect listed species or critical habitat and that formal consultation under Section 7 is not required. The NRC respectfully requests the Fish and Wildlife Service's concurrence with this determination. Please provide your concurrence, or any comments or information that you may have regarding the NRC's Section 7 determination for this matter to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, ATTN: Michele Sampson, Mail Stop T-4B34, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Jose Cuadrado of my staff by telephone at 301-415-0606 or by e-mail at jose.cuadrado@nrc.gov. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

/RA/

Michele Sampson, Chief
Spent Fuel Licensing Branch
Division of Spent Fuel Management
Office of Nuclear Material Safety
and Safeguards

Docket Nos.: 72-04 and 72-40
License No.: SNM-2503
TAC Nos.: L24717 and L24718

The ONS ISFSI's DFP is publicly available in the NRC's Agencywide Documents Access and Management System (ADAMS) accessible at <http://www.nrc.gov/reading-rm/adams.html>. The ADAMS accession number for the application package is ML12353A033.

The NRC approval of Duke's DFP will not authorize or result in changes to licensed operations or maintenance activities, or changes in the types, characteristics, or quantities of radiological or non-radiological effluents released into the environment from the ISFSI, or result in the creation of any solid waste. Moreover, the approval of the DFP will not authorize any construction activity, facility modification, or any other land-disturbing activity. Additionally, the scope of this proposed action does not include, and will not result in, the review and approval of any decontamination or decommissioning activity or license termination for the ISFSI or any other part of the ONS site. Any future NRC approval of site-disturbing remediation activities conducted by Duke would require an NRC environmental review, including an Endangered Species Act review.

In accordance with 10 CFR Part 51, the NRC regulations that implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the NRC is preparing an environmental assessment (EA) for the proposed action. Given the reasons set forth above, the NRC has determined that the approval of the DFP is a procedural and administrative action that will not result in any significant impact to the environment. Therefore, the NRC has determined that the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect listed species or critical habitat and that formal consultation under Section 7 is not required. The NRC respectfully requests the Fish and Wildlife Service's concurrence with this determination. Please provide your concurrence, or any comments or information that you may have regarding the NRC's Section 7 determination for this matter to the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, ATTN: Michele Sampson, Mail Stop T-4B34, U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Washington, DC 20555. If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Jose Cuadrado of my staff by telephone at 301-415-0606 or by e-mail at jose.cuadrado@nrc.gov. Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,
/RA/
 Michele Sampson, Chief
 Spent Fuel Licensing Branch
 Division of Spent Fuel Management
 Office of Nuclear Material Safety
 and Safeguards

Docket Nos.: 72-04 and 72-40
 License No.: SNM-2503
 TAC Nos.: L24717 and L24718

G:\SFST\72.30 Decommissioning Funding Plans\Duke\Oconee DFP Consultation Letter to FWS.docx
ADAMS P8 Accession No.: ML15224B592

OFC	DSFM		DSFM		DSFM					
NAME	JArce		WWheatley		MSampson					
DATE	7/21/15		7/22/15		8/10/15					

C = COVER E = COVER & ENCLOSURE N = NO COPY

OFFICIAL RECORD COPY